

Amendments to the Drawing Figures:

The attached drawing sheets include proposed changes to FIGs. 1 and 6 and replace the original sheets including FIGs. 1-2 and 6.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS/DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

By this Amendment, Applicant amends the Abstract, revise FIGs. 1 and 6, and amend claims 1, 2, 5 and 7. Accordingly, claims 1-7 are pending in the application.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging the claim for priority and receipt of certified copies of the priority documents.

Claims are amended to improve the formatting and readability, and for minor clarification.

Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested in view of the following Remarks.

OBJECTION TO DRAWINGS

By this Amendment, Applicant amends FIGs. 1 and 6 to label certain functional blocks, as requested by the Examiner.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully request that the objections to the drawings be withdrawn.

OBJECTION TO SPECIFICATION

By this Amendment, Applicant amends the Abstract to replace the word "comprises" with the word "includes," as requested by the Examiner.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objections to the specification be withdrawn.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

By this Amendment, Applicant amends claims 1, 2, 5 and 5 to delete the dashes "-" and to provide appropriate indentation, as requested by the Examiner.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objections to the claims be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. § 112

The Office Action rejects claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 because of the

inclusion of two phrases in the claims: (1) "*dependent on the relative timing of the signals at the inputs;*" and (2) "*relative delay.*"

For clarification, Applicant hereby amends the first phrase to read: "dependent on the relative timing with respect to each other of the signals at the inputs." Applicant respectfully submits that the amended claim is clear.

Furthermore, the specification explains exemplary embodiments of this characteristic at least at page 1, lines 13-20; page 5, lines 14-19; etc.

Applicant also respectfully notes that the mere inclusion of a "relative term" most certainly does not render a claim. The numbers of valid patents issued by the United States Patent & Trademark Office that include terms such as "*greater than*" or "*less than*" or even the word "*relative*" are legion. Applicant respectfully submits that anyone of skill in the art would easily and plainly understand the meaning of the relative timing of signals with respect to each other.

Applicant respectfully traverses the second ground of rejection pertaining to the inclusion of the phrase "*relative delay.*"

At the outset, Applicant respectfully notes that the term "*relative delay*" as recited in the claims is part of a longer phrase: "*a relative delay between the times after which signals at the inputs affect the interface element.*"

Applicant respectfully submits that by this phrase the claims do indeed "*properly define the 'delay' between two points in time*" with the "points in time" being the points in time *after which signals at the inputs affect the interface element.* Moreover, Applicant again notes that the mere inclusion of a "relative term" most certainly does not render a claim indefinite, and furthermore, anyone of skill in the art would easily and plainly understand what a "relative delay between the times after which signals at the inputs affect the interface element" means.

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 1-7 under be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action rejects claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over Chen et al.

U.S. Patent 6,895,540 ("Chen").

Applicant respectfully traverses those rejections for at least the following reasons.

Chen has a U.S. filing date of 18 July 2002. The present application claims priority from European Patent Application 02077495.6, filed in the English language on 21 June 2002. Priority has been properly claims in the filing papers, including the Declaration. The Examiner has already acknowledged receipt of certified copies of the priority documents. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that priority for this patent application has been perfected to 21 June 2002, which antedates Chen.

Accordingly, for at least this reason, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1-7 over Chen be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing explanations, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and reexamine the present application, allow claims 1-7 and pass the application to issue.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this reply to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0238 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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